

Student Tuition to Remain Flat at Centralia College

Increased Funding: Will Allow College to Restore Some Services Cut During Economic Downturn

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Centralia College students will see flat tuition rates and increased services this fall, thanks to a tuition freeze coupled with increased state funding for the upcoming school year.

The state Legislature in June increased higher-education funding and froze tuition rates at Washington's community colleges and universities.

The tuition freeze marks the first time that cost has remained flat since 1989.

Lawmakers boosted higher education funding by 12 percent and directed colleges and universities to freeze tuition at the current rate for in-state students.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges extended the flat tuition rates to nonresident students attending Centralia College and other public two-year colleges in Washington.

Centralia College Vice President of Finance and Administration Steve Ward said the state added more than \$500,000 for the upcoming year to Centralia College's operating budget – the first increased funding in five years.

“We're able to start replacing some of the services we lost,” he said.

The economic downturn resulted in lower state tax revenues over the past several years. Ward said the burden then shifted onto students in the form of higher tuition.

Tuition has increased 40 percent since 2008, he said, which buffered some of the impact budget cuts had on college services.

The \$500,000 in additional state funding will allow Centralia College to hire three tenured faculty members, six support staff and pay for initiatives for student retention and recruitment, Ward said.

This fall, the college will have new professors in communications, computer science and economics.

The recruitment and retention effort will feature an early alert system to help students ensure they stay on academic and financial aid tracks, Ward said.

“Sometimes students just don’t realize they’ve missed a step,” he said. “This allows us to intervene.”

Centralia College tuition for 15 credits per quarter will remain at \$4,000 per year for in-state students, about \$4,400 for out-of-state attendees and \$9,235 for international students in the 2013-2014 academic years.

Ward said after watching students struggle to pay rising costs of education over the last several years, the tuition freeze is welcome news.

“This is a great opportunity for those students to be able to attend without the specter of tuition increases on the horizon,” he said.